

## **Ground Rules for Group Deliberations and Consensus Building**

It is important to remember that all participants are not expected to agree with every word, statement, or sentence in the work products or documents your group discusses or prepares. Each participant should look at the work as a whole, not one part in isolation.

These ground rules will be helpful in your discussions.

1. Be courteous and listen while others are speaking.
2. Keep remarks brief. As a guideline, keep remarks to one minute per speaker. Time is of the essence.
3. Add new comments only; do not repeat what others have said.
4. Address the group leader or facilitator rather than other participants or members of the audience.
5. Keep an open mind. Listening to others of differing opinions is often where the greatest opportunity for increased understanding exists.
6. Be positive. Offer a constructive suggestion, not a criticism of someone's opinion about a subject.
7. Look for common ground. Do not seek to simply reinforce your own view or position, especially at the expense of another participant.
8. If you have spoken once during a specific round of discussion, allow others to speak before you make further contributions.